

Remarks/Arguments

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 1-34 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith, et al (U.S. 2002/0095306 A1 or U.S. 2002/0042808 A1) in view of Higgins, et al. (U.S. 5,754,571).

Smith discloses the following in paragraph [0022] and [0023] of patent application 0042808:

"[0022] **FIG. 9** shows a screen **130** that enables the user to configure preferences for delivery. Column **132** contains icons **132a**, **132b**, **132c** identifying data objects comprising, e.g., first class mail (**132a**), parcels (**132b**), and periodicals (**132c**), respectively; other types of data objects may, of course, be included. Columns **134**, **136**, **138**, and **140**, respectively, identify sites or addresses to which the objects of a given object class are to be redirected. For example, column **134** contains "home" icons that identify the home address of the user as the site to which the object is to be directed or redirected; column **136** contains "locker" icons that specify a facility (e.g., a "lockbox") to which the object is to be directed or redirected; and column **138** contains "hold at PO" icons that identify the user's Post Office as the site to which the objects are to be directed or redirected. (For simplicity, hereinafter the terms "direction" or "directed" will be used to indicate either the initial selection of a delivery location ("direction"), or a subsequent change in this location ("redirection"), or both).

[0023] Column **140** allows the user to enter a specific address that may differ from one of the preset addresses of columns **134-138**. For example, a home address may previously have been set for delivery of mail of all types. When the user is about to go on a business trip, for example, he or she may desire to have first class mail forwarded to the address of a hotel at which he or she will be staying until his or her return; to have parcels held in a locker and to have periodicals held at the local Post Office. This is accomplished simply by clicking on the "Enter New Address" icon in column **140** in the "First Class" mail row **132a** and by entering the address of the hotel; by clicking on the "Locker" icon in column **136** in the "Parcels"

mail row **132b**; and by clicking on the "Periodicals" icon in column **138** in the "Periodicals" mail row **132c**. The chosen preferences are desirably then indicated by a checkmark or other indicia, as shown in **FIG. 9**. These preferences may remain until subsequently changed, or may default to a user-defined configuration after a certain time period; or a sequence of addresses and associated time periods may be provided for the various data objects.

Smith discloses the following in paragraphs [0053] and [0054] of Patent Application 0095306:

"[0053] If the user continues the session, the Postport system retains the relevant postal transaction session information in a manner that is linked to the user's assigned user ID, as discussed below. When the user later logs on to the Postport system from, for example, a terminal **188** at the postal station **176** using the assigned user ID, the system transfers the session to the terminal. The user then continues to enter and/or edit the mailing address and postage information and/or print the labels and the postage before ending the session.

[0054] The session transfer may be facilitated by assigning to a given user a coded physical identification token, such as a key fob **200** with a User ID included as a machine-readable barcode **201** (**FIG. 11**). The user presents his or her physical identification token to a scanner that is connected to the system through, for example, the work station node **180**. The system then prompts the user to supply his or her password and, after verification of the password, the system transfers the linked messages and thus the session to the terminal then in use. As discussed in more detail below, the system may also transfer the linked messages to the various other terminals in the same postal station, such that the user can readily transfer the session to another terminal that is connected to a printer, a postage meter, and so forth, by logging on using the assigned user ID. The user may thus take full advantage of the Postport system's virtual post office services, even if he or she does not have the appropriate hardware and/or software to print the labels and postage."

Higgins discloses the following in column 4, line 34 to column 5, line 11:

"In determining the correct zip code it is important to note that the quality of the address interpretation depends on the success of the

previous steps. Without the correct ABL, good segmentation and reasonable character recognition, there is little hope of finding the correct zip.

In order for the correct zip to be found, the following conditions have to be met. The correct candidate ABL has to be used. The number of characters in the word containing the zip has to clearly indicate that this word contains the zip code. That is, segmentation must recognize the word breaks around the zip code, which is quite difficult for hand images due to inconsistencies in handwriting. The characters have to be segmented correctly. Errors in character segmentation such as splitting a character into two separate characters or combining two characters as one, preclude the possibility of good character recognition and, hence, address interpretation. Character recognition must produce the correct character. The confidence of the correct characters have to be good. This is not as important as having the correct character recognized, but it does allow more decisions on zip codes to be finalized.

An example of an image **64** passed through this conventional process of address block location segmentations, character recognition and address interpretation indicated by reference number **65** is shown in FIG. 5. In this illustrative example, a case where the address interpretation process could not make a determination due to the inaccurately recognized digit (13821 versus 13827).

Since 13821 is not a valid zip code, as can be verified with a database search, a bar code will not be assigned and so manual processing is required. It will be shown, hereinafter, how adaptive signal processing, in accordance with the present invention, was successfully applied to this problem."

In this example, the zip code has been recognized incorrectly and so the database search does not yield an exact match. Rather than assigning a potentially incorrect bar code

Neither Smith nor Higgins, taken separately or together, discloses or anticipates the steps of claim 1, namely, capturing by the sender the name and physical address of the recipient and the sender in the form of an image; transmitting the image to a data center where the image is processed by translating the image consisting of text and

graphics to selected alphanumerics; translating the name and physical address of the recipient into an e-mail address; and notifying the recipient of the expected delivery of the sealed mail and indicating the selected alphanumerics of the translated image.

Higgins discloses a method for the cursive address recognition of mail pieces. In Smith, the recipient is not notified of the expected delivery of the sealed mail while indicating the selected alphanumerics of the translated image. Smith also requires that the (sender) user print a user ID included as a machine-readable barcode 201 so as to capture the identity of each mailpiece during the inbound postal tracking process, to enable accurate data message linkage prior to the physical delivery of the mail piece to the (recipient) user.

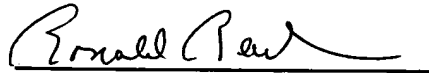
Applicant does not claim a method in which a sender printed personal ID code is added to each mail piece, and the ID code is captured by the post. Applicant claims a method in which the sender captures the name and physical address of the recipient and sender in the form of an image and the translation of the name and physical address of the recipient into an e-mail address.

Furthermore, Smith requires this same ID code be associated (added) to any other postal data object (MESSAGE, etc.) so that it can be later associated (LINKED) at the mail piece recipient's computer display. Smith does not resolve how he can produce the accurate metering of more than one such data objects for a sender that submits more than one mail piece with the same personal ID code into the postal system on the same day.

Appln. No.: 09/818,480
Amdt. Dated September 2, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated July 13, 2004

In view of the above, claims 1-34 are patentable. If the Examiner has any questions, will he please telephone the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald Reichman
Reg. No. 26,796
Attorney of Record
Telephone (203) 924-3854

PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and
Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000